

How to Prepare a Music Lesson by Analyzing Teaching Materials: Understanding the Non-musical and Musical Languages in Music Teaching Materials

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Abstract: Lesson preparation is a crucial part of the teaching process, which is directly related to the quality and efficiency of classroom teaching. However, in the actual lesson preparation for music teaching, there are some problems. For example, when teachers see the teaching materials of a music lesson, they don't know from which aspects to prepare the lesson, what the contents of lesson preparation are, what the order of lesson preparation is, from which aspects they should think about lesson preparation, and where the key and difficult points of lesson preparation are for different types of music courses. Starting from the perspectives of the explicit and implicit non-musical and musical languages contained in music teaching materials, this paper specifically analyzes what the implicit and explicit musical and non-musical languages in the teaching materials include, from which angles teachers should analyze and think about different types of courses, and how teachers can prepare a music lesson well in specific teaching. It is hoped to provide some references for music teachers' ideas and methods of lesson preparation.

Keywords: Music in primary and secondary schools; Teaching materials; Lesson preparation; Musical language; Non-musical language

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1. The non-musical and musical languages in the music score in teaching materials

By organizing relatively complete and typical music scores, it can be found that the arrangement and composition of teaching material examples mainly consist of four parts: pictures, graphic scores (occasionally), texts, and music scores. Through observing music teaching materials (taking the staff notation as an example), summarizing and organizing the composition of teaching material contents, and starting from the characteristics of the music discipline, the teaching material contents are divided into non-musical language and musical language. The non-musical language refers to the contents expressed in ways other than musical language, mainly including picture information and text information. The picture information mainly includes pictures and

graphic scores. The text information mainly includes the titles of musical works, the composers and lyricists, the lyrics, the description of musical emotions, the after-class thinking, the knowledge links, and other information that describes music in words. The musical language refers to the contents expressed in musical language, mainly including the musical scores of music—that is, the core elements that constitute music, such as melody, rhythm, meter, musical notations, musical forms, harmony, etc.

2. Characteristics of non-musical and musical languages

By sorting out the teaching materials of music courses in primary and secondary schools, educators can find that the printed musical examples in teaching materials for singing lessons are generally relatively complete. Since the musical examples in teaching materials for appreciation lessons are relatively long in length, usually only relatively important musical passages and themes are excerpted in the teaching materials. Therefore, for the teaching materials of appreciation lessons, the musical language that can be seen from the information on the excerpted musical scores is very limited. So educators need to dig deeply into the relatively complete musical scores of musical works and conduct an overall analysis. For the brief musical passages and themes that educators can see in the music teaching materials, and the relatively complex music that educators cannot see in the teaching materials but can hear, the musical language also has a second characteristic, that is, the explicit and implicit characteristics of the musical language.

The non-musical and musical languages on the music score in teaching materials have explicit and implicit characteristics (**Figure 1**). Educators can see the text information and picture information on the music score in teaching materials, but there is also a part of non-musical language information that educators cannot see, that is, the hidden non-musical language. The hidden non-musical language is generally hidden in the songs and needs to be transformed through listening and experiencing. During this process, the musical language is transformed into written language for expression. For example, the musical emotions, musical pictures, and musical feelings hidden in the music score, etc. In teaching, especially in appreciation lessons, the teacher's excavation of the hidden non-musical language and guidance for students play a crucial role in stimulating students' interest in listening, guiding students to understand the musical content, comprehend the musical structure, and grasp the musical style. The explicit musical language refers to the content of the music score that educators can directly see in the music score, such as mode, meter, notes, rhythm, melody, measures, musical notations, etc. The implicit musical language refers to the vertical content that is sometimes invisible on the music score and hidden in the music score, such as the harmony, orchestration, dynamics, polyphony, etc., of the music. The teaching process of teachers is a process of digging deeply into the implicit musical language of the music score, teaching through non-musical language, and finally returning to both the explicit and implicit musical languages.

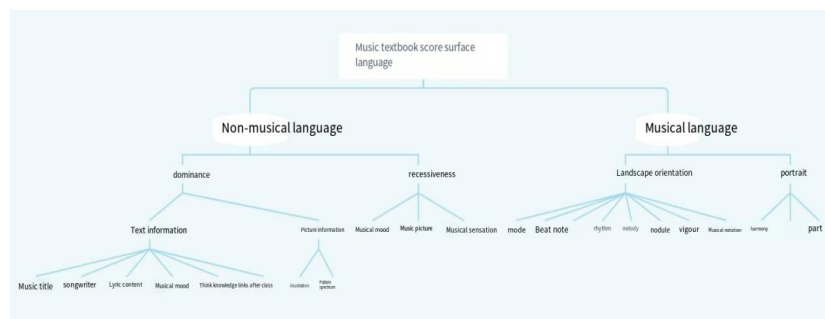


Figure 1. Music textbook notation language

3. The relationship between non-musical and musical languages

The non-musical and musical languages on the music score are independent of each other. The purposes they aim to achieve are different. The purpose of non-musical language is to attract students' attention, make the abstract musical content concrete, reduce the difficulty of students' learning, and cultivate students' musical perception ability. For example, in "The Skater's Waltz" in the first volume of Grade 7, the graphic scores of each musical theme are printed in the second volume of the teaching materials, which is convenient for students to observe the direction of the musical melody and experience the changes of the musical melody.

Musical language is the essence of the music discipline and the fundamental purpose to be achieved in music discipline teaching. The teaching purpose of the music discipline is to guide students to be able to read, understand, and sing musical language.

The non-musical and musical languages on the music score are interconnected and complementary to each other. In actual teaching materials, educators will find that a music teaching material contains both texts, pictures, and music scores. The non-musical language of music teaching materials is expressed based on musical language and is a specific manifestation of musical language. For example, the illustrated characters, illustrated scenes, color matching, and graphic scores in the teaching materials are all designed based on the musical content, musical events, and musical elements of the music score. Musical language is made intuitive, concrete, and visualized through non-musical language. The non-musical and musical languages in music teaching materials work together. Musical language reflects the characteristics of the music discipline, and non-musical language enriches and supplements musical language, jointly serving music classroom teaching.

4. How to understand the non-musical and musical language information in music teaching materials

Pay attention to the non-musical language in music teaching materials. In lesson preparation, educators should pay attention to the relevant illustrations and graphic scores used in the music score. Generally, the illustrations in the teaching materials are closely related to the content of the song, and the illustrations also hide the requirements for teaching objectives. For example, in the lesson "Moon Sister, Come Down" in the first volume of Grade 6 of the People's Music Edition (staff notation), there is an illustration of "Classification of Western Musical Instruments" (Musical Example 4) in the book, which implies that in this lesson, educators need to introduce Western bowed string instruments and woodwind instruments, and understand the shape, structure, timbre, and playing methods of the instruments.

Pay attention to the information about the title of the musical work, the composer, and the lyricist in lesson preparation. Especially for more famous works or authors, educators need to have a more detailed and in-depth understanding. The understanding of the song content is mainly reflected through the lyrics. In lesson preparation, educators should pay attention to the main characters, actions, parts of speech, and events expressed in the lyrics. These can also be used as the basis for creating scenarios in the introduction part of the musical work. The after-class thinking is the guide for the teaching objectives and teaching direction. In lesson preparation, educators should pay attention to the abilities and qualities that students need to master as required by the after-class thinking questions. Knowledge expansion is mainly concentrated in the teaching materials for Grades 7–9. In lesson preparation, teachers should grasp the key words, catch the direction of knowledge expansion, and conduct in-depth expansion in a certain knowledge area and direction.

Selectively focus on the explicit or implicit characteristics of musical language according to different types

of courses. From the perspective of teaching material arrangement, in singing lessons, the music scores are generally printed in more detail and completely, and the musical language can be clearly seen in the teaching materials. Therefore, in singing lessons, lesson preparation should focus more on grasping the music scores in the teaching materials, such as the meter, rhythm, melody, musical notations, and song structure of the song. From the perspective of the teaching objectives of singing lessons, the main teaching objective of singing lessons is generally for students to learn to sing songs. Paying attention to the musical elements in the music score is conducive to students mastering the ability to read music scores and accurately sing the song, thus completing the teaching task. For appreciation lessons, while paying attention to explicit music, educators should dig deeper into implicit musical language. Generally, the music scores of appreciation works are long, the musical structure is relatively complex, there are no lyrics, and the music is more abstract. In teaching, there may be phenomena where students cannot understand, and teachers do not know how to teach. In response to this phenomenon, teachers should base on the complete musical example and work hard on analyzing the implicit musical language in the music score, and do more work on music score analysis. For example, first, listen to the work completely in the music score. Since the music may be more abstract, educators need to combine the non-musical language of the music, including the title of the song, the composer and lyricist, the illustrations of the music, after-class thinking, knowledge links, etc., and consult relevant materials to comprehensively grasp the scenes and content expressed by the music, laying a foundation for the analysis of musical language. In the analysis of musical language, in addition to the explicit musical language mentioned above, there is also implicit musical language, such as musical form structure, paragraphs, musical themes, etc. In addition to the horizontal musical line analysis, there is also vertical polyphonic music analysis, such as musical orchestration and harmony. Regarding orchestration, which instrument is the main instrument for this theme? Why use this (type of) instrument? What is its function? Regarding harmony, what color does this harmony combination have in the music? What musical feeling does it give you?

Do a good job in the transformation from musical language to non-musical language. In teaching, teachers should listen to and analyze musical works relatively objectively. They should not only combine the thinking of their own professional discipline but also understand the learning situation of students, and transform musical thinking and musical language into something that students can understand and comprehend, making the abstract musical language concrete. The ways to make abstract language concrete can be achieved through several paths: 1. Visualize musical language. In appreciation lessons, the musical works are long, and many musical themes and paragraphs are relatively complex. Therefore, in teaching, educators can use music scores, pictures, videos, graphic scores, colors, shapes, etc., to more intuitively and concretely display musical language, reducing the difficulty for students to understand and remember. 2. Act out musical language. Try to mobilize all the sensory organs of students to make a joint response, promote the coordination of various parts of the body, form a variety of sensory linkages, effectively promote students' ability to transform listening into musical expression, and exercise students' attention, memory, control ability, image thinking, logical thinking, and body coordination ability. 3. Transcribe musical language into words. That is, use language to express the musical scenes depicted and expressed by music. This process is also a process in which students transform their musical feelings and understanding of music into specific expressible words through sensory perception, exercising students' musical perception and aesthetic ability, the ability to transform musical language into written language, the ability to express in written language, and the ability to analyze and understand music.

The purpose of non-musical language is to better understand musical language. The fundamental purpose

of music teaching is to cultivate students' ability to transform musical language into non-musical language, that is, students' understanding of musical language. Non-musical language is only a method and means for teaching and plays an auxiliary role in understanding music. In real life, it is very rare for students to actually see music scores like those in teaching materials. More often, it is music without scores, or even music without knowing the title or the author. It may be the music that students hear when they enter a concert hall, on their mobile phones, or on the roadside. This kind of appreciation and listening happens at any time. Therefore, the most important thing in music classroom teaching is to let students maintain sensitivity and familiarity with all kinds of music and be able to have a certain awareness of music at the moment of listening, such as the emotion, content, type (pop or classical), period, and style of the song. Music teaching cultivates students' ability to experience-perceive-analyze-understand, and this ability is also an important ability to be achieved in the teaching objectives of the compulsory education stage.

Embodied cognition: Transform musical language into body language ^[1]. Music is a practical discipline, and practical activities are a process in which the human brain and body actively participate. Therefore, music activities should not be separated from the participation of the human brain and body. The theory of embodied cognition believes that human cognition is actually the product of the interaction among the brain-body-environment, advocating that the body plays a key role in learning ^[2]. Students' musical experience is actually a process in which students comprehensively mobilize all parts of their bodies, that is, seeing with the eyes, listening with the ears, singing with the mouth, moving the body, having a sense of touch, and performing in a comprehensive scenario. In teaching, educators should first mobilize students' physical perception of music. For example, in the initial listening, let them freely make appropriate movements along with the music. Most of the time, as long as students hear the music, their bodies will unconsciously move in rhythm with the music beat, which is the body's reflex. In actual classrooms, many teachers suppress students by asking them to sit straight or lie down to listen to music, ignoring students' physical perception of music. Corresponding activities should be designed according to the learning situation of different grades and types of courses to actively mobilize students' participation and experience.

The music discipline is distinct from other disciplines and possesses its own unique characteristics, namely abstractness, emotionality, temporality, and creativity. In music classroom teaching, it is essential to base teaching on the characteristics of the music discipline. Starting from the foundation of conducting an excellent class, which is to prepare a class well, teachers should deeply explore the non-musical and musical language information in music teaching materials. Depending on different types of music courses, they should focus on the explicit and implicit musical language information of music with appropriate emphasis. Additionally, they should do a good job in transforming between musical and non-musical languages. By making use of non-musical language, teachers can guide students to have a better understanding of musical language.

5. Conclusion

The characteristics of the music discipline follow the law of transitioning from sensory perception to rational understanding. In teaching, students' entire perception system should be mobilized, and teachers should also fully mobilize their own sensory system in lesson preparation. They should have interdisciplinary thinking and learn to view the lesson preparation and teaching work from multiple perspectives, including "art", "sports", and other disciplines. This will open up the teaching ideas, diversify teaching activities, and broaden teaching

horizons. When it comes to interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary integration and reference, educators must also adhere to the principle of moderation. It is necessary to reflect the music thinking, language, knowledge, and ability of the music discipline. In lesson preparation, educators should start from the textbook and grasp the music language and non-music language of the spectrum. From these two perspectives, lesson preparation will be more diverse, the grasp of teaching content will be more comprehensive, and the design of teaching ideas and activities will be more diverse.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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